

HR 9-1985/a

30 July 1957

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : Assistant to the Director

SUBJECT : Comments on 10 Suggestions for Improvement  
of the Central Intelligence Agency

1. I concur with the IG that it is dangerous for CIA to attempt to influence articles published within the United States or to speak to the press on foreign affairs matters.

2. As to the IG's recommendations:

(1) Without important exception that I am aware of, CIA officials within recent months have not been conferring in their offices with media agents except in the presence of the Assistant to the Director.

(2) Concur.

(3) This point is covered in [ ] of 6 January 1956. The Assistant to the Director is not required, under this regulation, to obtain specific approval of the DCI in each case. The degree of discretion now authorized by the DCI to the Assistant to the Director should be continued.

3. The current regulation on public relations [ ] is adequate to cover all points raised by the IG, at least for the time being. The system developed under it has been working out reasonably well, although at times some individuals have talked more with media representatives than they have reported under the terms of para. 6.

4. The cure for these irregularities, if they have taken place, would seem to be found in para. 7 which directs that the regulation be brought periodically to the attention of all employees. Compliance with the regulation will reduce many problems. Those failing to understand the reasons for the regulation's existence might be well advised to read James Reston's column in the New York Times of 15 August 1954 which expresses views of one newsmen on the propriety of having a secret agency of the Government carry on relations with

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the press. In this column Reston wrote in part (with reference to the Rastvorov and Otto John cases then in the news):

"What has happened here in the last couple of weeks is that the intelligence agency of the Government (the C. I. A.) has moved out of the realm of secret service work and into the realm of public propaganda.....

"...In this fierce struggle with the Communists, the United States must have an effective secret service which does all sorts of things that cannot, in the national interest, be printed.....

"There is a growing tendency here, however, to expect the press to go beyond this: not only to leave things out of the papers but to put things in which may be advantageous to some particular agency but which are not true.

"There is another danger in this procedure beyond the obvious one of misleading the public. This is that, in entering the field of public propaganda, the Central Intelligence Agency jeopardizes the secrecy which it must enjoy if it is to operate effectively.....

"A good case can be made for this immunity," /i.e., CIA's from Congressional supervision/ "but Congress is not likely to grant it to an agency that insists on secrecy one day and is making propaganda the next."

  
Assistant to the Director

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